LOCATION: MT. ETNA, ITALY.
SITUATION: VOLCANIC ERUPTION.
RESPONDING: AVENGERS ACADEMY FACULTY.
FIELD LEADER: GIANT-MAN.
OKAY. I'M SENDING THE ASH TO AN UNINHABITED DIMENSION. THE REST OF YOU FOCUS ON LAVA CONTAINMENT AND CIVILIAN EVACUATION.
DISASTER RELIEF MIGHT BE THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK WE DO.
IT'S NOT AS FLASHY AS BEATING UP CYBORG GORILLAS, BUT THE NUMBER OF LIVES SAVED CAN BE IN THE THOUSANDS... EVEN HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS.
SO WHY ARE WE WATCHING IT ON PLASMA SCREEN INSTEAD OF HELPING? WE JUST BEAT KORVAC! A COSMIC GOD! WE'RE READY FOR THIS!

DISASTER RESPONSE

CHRISTOS GAGE
WRITER

SEAN CHEN
PENCILLER

SCOTT HANNA
INKER

JEROMY COX
COLORIST

VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
LETTERER

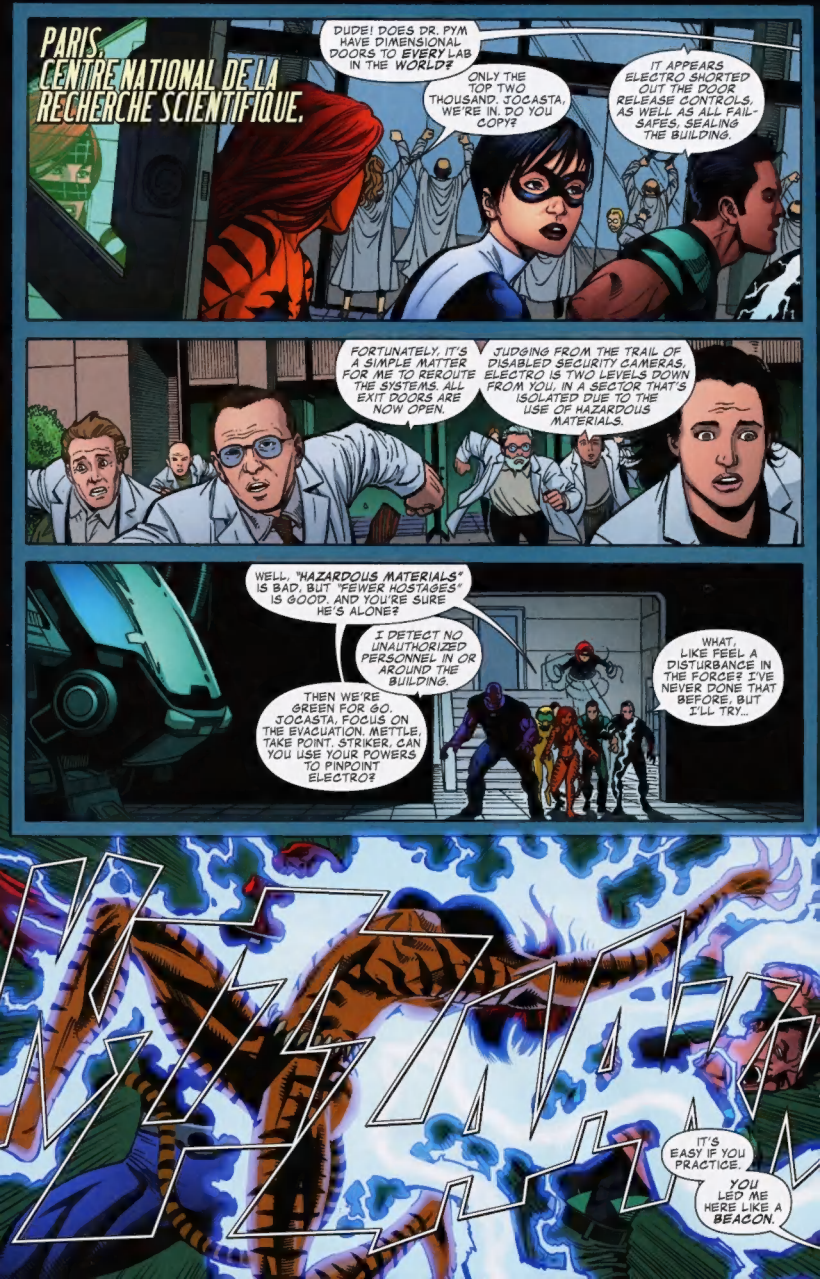
BILLY TAN & LEONARDO OLEA
COVER ARTISTS

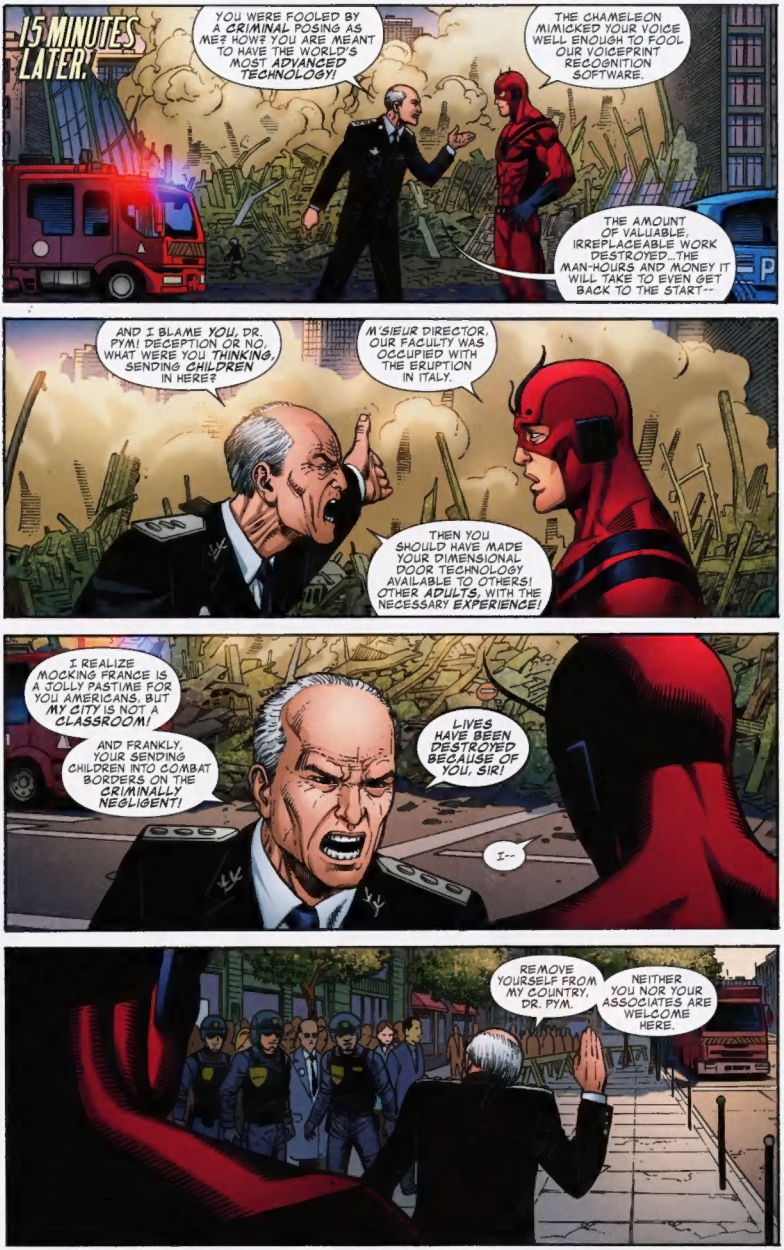
JOHN DENNING
ASSISTANT EDITOR

BILL ROSEMANN
EDITOR

AXEL ALONSO EDITOR IN CHIEF
JOE QUESADA CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER
DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER
ALAN FINE EXEC. PRODUCER

I DIDN'T REALIZE...
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU WHISPERING ABOUT?
US, HAZMAT. I WAS TELLING TIGRA WE'RE READY TO TAKE ON ELECTRO. RIGHT?
LET ME AT HIM. THAT GUY THINKS HE INVENTED ELECTRICAL POWERS!
WELL...YOU ARE ALL USED TO SPARRING WITH STRIKER; HIS ABILITIES ARE PRETTY SIMILAR. AND WE'VE GOT THE ADVANTAGE IN NUMBERS. JOCASTA, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I'VE RUN THIRTY-TWO SIMULATIONS. ALL RESULT IN SUCCESSFUL APPREHENSION OF ELECTRO, MOST WITH NO MAJOR INJURIES.
GREER, JOCASTA'S PATCHED ME IN TO YOUR CONVERSATION...AND WHILE IT'S YOUR CALL, I THINK IT'S VITAL YOU LET THE KIDS DO THIS.
DEFEATING A WELL-KNOWN CRIMINAL...SAVING HOSTAGES...THIS COULD BE THEIR TURNING POINT. WHEN THEY FINALLY START FEELING LIKE HEROES.
COPY. AND I AGREE. OKAY, GUYS...MISSION-READY IN ONE MINUTE.
YES!
TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY. I WANT TO CONFIRM HE'S ALONE. OR WE SCRUB THE WHOLE THING. JOCASTA, YOU'LL PATCH INTO THE BUILDING'S SYSTEMS?
I'M WORKING ON IT NOW. ONCE I'VE GAINED ACCESS I'LL SCAN FOR HOSTILES AND FACILITATE CIVILIAN EVACUATION.
THEN ALL THAT'S LEFT TO SAY IS...
AVENGERS ACADEMY ASSEMBLE!


PARIS, CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE.
DUDE! DOES DR. PYM HAVE DIMENSIONAL DOORS TO EVERY LAB IN THE WORLD?
ONLY THE TOP TWO THOUSAND, JOCASTA, WE'RE IN. DO YOU COPY?
IT APPEARS ELECTRO SHORTED OUT THE DOOR RELEASE CONTROLS, AS WELL AS ALL FAIL-SAFES, SEALING THE BUILDING.
FORTUNATELY, IT'S A SIMPLE MATTER FOR ME TO REROUTE THE SYSTEMS. ALL EXIT DOORS ARE NOW OPEN.
JUDGING FROM THE TRAIL OF DISABLED SECURITY CAMERAS, ELECTRO IS TWO LEVELS DOWN FROM YOU, IN A SECTOR THAT'S ISOLATED DUE TO THE USE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.
WELL, "HAZARDOUS MATERIALS" IS BAD, BUT "FEWER HOSTAGES" IS GOOD. AND YOU'RE SURE HE'S ALONE?
I DETECT NO UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL IN OR AROUND THE BUILDING.
THEN WE'RE GREEN FOR GO. JOCASTA, FOCUS ON THE EVACUATION. METTLE, TAKE POINT. STRIKER, CAN YOU USE YOUR POWERS TO PINPOINT ELECTRO?
WHAT, LIKE FEEL A DISTURBANCE IN THE FORCE? I'VE NEVER DONE THAT BEFORE, BUT I'LL TRY...
IT'S EASY IF YOU PRACTICE.
YOU LED ME HERE LIKE A BEACON.


15 MINUTES LATER.
YOU WERE FOOLED BY A CRIMINAL POSING AS ME? HOW? YOU ARE MEANT TO HAVE THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY!
THE CHAMELEON MIMICKED YOUR VOICE WELL ENOUGH TO FOOL OUR VOICEPRINT RECOGNITION SOFTWARE.
THE AMOUNT OF VALUABLE, IRREPLACEABLE WORK DESTROYED...THE MAN-HOURS AND MONEY IT WILL TAKE TO EVEN GET BACK TO THE START--
AND I BLAME YOU, DR. PYM! DECEPTION OR NO, WHAT WERE YOU THINKING, SENDING CHILDREN IN HERE?
M'SIEUR DIRECTOR, OUR FACULTY WAS OCCUPIED WITH THE ERUPTION IN ITALY.
THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE MADE YOUR DIMENSIONAL DOOR TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE TO OTHERS! OTHER ADULTS, WITH THE NECESSARY EXPERIENCE!
I REALIZE MOCKING FRANCE IS A JOLLY PASTIME FOR YOU AMERICANS, BUT MY CITY IS NOT A CLASSROOM!
AND FRANKLY, YOUR SENDING CHILDREN INTO COMBAT BORDERS ON THE CRIMINALLY NEGLIGENT!
LIVES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BECAUSE OF YOU, SIR!
I--
REMOVE YOURSELF FROM MY COUNTRY, DR. PYM.
NEITHER YOU NOR YOUR ASSOCIATES ARE WELCOME HERE.

AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL

JOHN DENNING, ASST. EDITOR
BILL ROSEMANN, EDITOR
AXEL ALONSO, EDITOR IN CHIEF
JOE QUESADA, CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER
DAN BUCKLEY, PUBLISHER
ALAN FINE, EXEC. PRODUCER

Whoa, the Sinister Six really handed our guys a beating, didn't they? For more on their nefarious plans, check out future issues of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN...and hey, ASM #661 and #662 guest star the kids of Avengers Academy, as Spidey returns to teaching for a day as a substitute for Giant-Man and the rest of the staff! Those two issues were written by yours truly and drawn by the awesome Reilly Brown and Victor Olazaba. It's raining AVENGERS ACADEMY...hallelujah! Or maybe not, as Tyler points out:

I'm a long time collector of Marvel comics, but a first time writer to a comic letter column. I wanted to say, first up, that I've really enjoyed this title. It seems like a rare thing these days when a new series can so immediately make me care about a cast consisting of largely new characters. So, kudos to you and the rest of the team for creating such a fun and compelling new title.

That said, I actually wanted to write you with a complaint (or, maybe, rather a concern) that I have about Marvel's new tendency to double ship many of their titles each month. As a collector, I have a limited monthly comic budget, and Marvel should be happy to know that I spend that limited budget almost entirely on Marvel comics. But, when several of those comics are double shipping each month, it puts me in a bit of a bind. Instead of making me spend more money each month (which I'm sure is part of the reason they are doing it, but which I simply can't afford to do), it instead forces me to choose between titles. Personally, I'd rather collect a wider range of titles, but instead I find myself debating. Should I buy two issues of UNCANNY X-FORCE? Or two issues of AVENGERS ACADEMY? Again, I'd love to buy both, but I just don't have the money in my budget to. This is doubly frustrating because I often find myself choosing the more established title over the newer title. So, at least for me, it seems like Marvel's new policy is actually hurting the line's diversity.

Anyhow, I know that these aren't decisions that you make personally, and are probably made by someone on the publishing side of things. But I thought that I'd email you about it, since you seem to be really engaged with your fans and willing to address their concerns. I'd love to hear your thoughts on the matter, or wouldn't mind you forwarding it on to anyone who might be involved in that process. Thanks again for your time and for creating such a great comic book.

Oh, and in terms of potential crossover characters, it would be great to see the kids from Academy run into the youngest generation of X-characters, such as X-23, Surge, Dust, the Cuckoos and Hellion.

Thanks again, and Make Mine Marvel (do people still say that? I do!)!

Tyler Hill

Tyler, thanks for sharing your concerns with us, especially in such a thoughtful and eloquent way. You're right, the decisions about double shipping are made by others (I'm not even completely sure who), so don't consider what I'm about to say Marvel's "official policy" or anything, but I'll try to shed some light on the thinking behind it.

First of all, I believe some retailers expressed to Marvel that, rather than miniseries, they'd rather see more issues of existing titles, so that in these difficult economic times they have a better idea of how many to order (based on sales of previous issues). I'm also sure you're right that Marvel thinks they can make money by shipping more issues of profitable books. Marvel is a business...an awesome business, but still a company that is trying to make money selling its product, and they tend to do what they think will help make that happen while also keeping its customers happy. That aside, I know there are some reasons specific to AVENGERS ACADEMY that I can share as well.

As you mentioned, established titles tend to have an advantage over new ones in the current market. One of the reasons we wanted to ship this book twice a month on occasion is to enable readers to get to know (and hopefully love) the new characters faster. And it seems to be working...both in terms of the critical praise we've received, the enthusiastic fan reaction, and the fact that our sales numbers have been rock-solid for five issues in a row, a rarity these days. I've also spoken to retailers who say that when AA double ships, they sell extra copies of the previous issue. You yourself mentioned that you have come to care about the characters quickly. So hopefully we're taking steps to ensure the continued success (and existence) of this book.

Strictly from a creative standpoint, we also saw the opportunity to accomplish some fun and awesome stuff all in one year. The battle with Korvac...the Sinister Six... more personal moments like the Super Hero Prom...the coming shake-ups of Fear Itself...it wouldn't be possible to do all those things with just a monthly schedule.

Of course, none of this solves your problem. Unfortunately, I don't really have a solution. The snarky answer would be, "Stop buying another book!" But that's not an answer at all. I'm a comic fan too; after thirty years I still get excited every new comic day. When you can't afford to get all the comics you want to, that's a bad thing. And I'm sorry. At the end of the day, we feel the positives outweigh the negatives... but the negatives aren't numbers, they're people, and we feel awful that you're having this dilemma.

One suggestion I came up with is to find another fan in a similar situation to you, and each pick up different titles, then loan each other the ones you couldn't get. Would that work for you?

And I'd like to know: is anyone else in Tyler's situation? If so, how has it affected you? Do you want less Avengers Academy or more? Are we totally wrong about what we're doing? Speak, Marvelites! It's the only way we'll learn! And thanks again for writing, Tyler.

I have one question: It was established in MIGHTY AVENGERS that the Wasp's (now Carina's) body basically was the Infinite Avengers Mansion. Now that Carina has returned to her former shape, wouldn't the Infinite Mansion disappear?

Lars Meyer
Germany

Great question, Lars! But to clarify, what those issues of MIGHTY AVENGERS established is that the Infinite Mansion was built to be a sort of circulatory system for "Janet's" energy-body, essentially holding it together and transmitting her the Wasp's memories. Carina's energy body was there before the Mansion, and now the Mansion is still in Underspace, but without Carina. Ah, I love fake science!

Also, Jeff C. from Orleans, VT sent a cool letter that I'm not printing because one of the things he suggested hits uncannily close to something I have planned for the future...let's keep it on the down low, Jeff! But I like the way you think!

Finally, in just two weeks (sorry, Tyler), look out for AVENGERS ACADEMY #14.1 – our installment of the Point One initiative that Marvel has pursued to provide a convenient jumping-on point for new readers, as well as set up interesting new story threads. Ever wonder what happened to the super-powered teens Norman Osborn recruited...but who weren't inducted into Avengers Academy? You're about to find out...and so are the Academy kids...and their lives may never be the same!

Christos Gage

Send e-mail to
MHEROES@MARVEL.COM
(please mark as OKAY TO PRINT)